REPORT

OF THE SECOND ANGLO-RUSSIAN STUDENT CONFERENCE HELD AT THE DIOCESAN RETREAT HOUSE, ST. ALBANS,

28th DEC., 1927, to 2nd JAN., 1928

PUBLISHED BY
THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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INTRODUCTION

MANY Conferences are held in the Student Christian Movement, but this Conference and a similar one held in January, 1927, between Russian Orthodox and Anglican Students, represent a new departure. In the last few years much has been done to establish understanding and relations between the leaders of the Anglican and Orthodox Churches, but we believe that these two Conferences represent the first attempt to bring together in an informal and unofficial manner the young men and women of the two communions. The main contribution of the Student Christian Movement to the cause of unity is the bringing about of such understanding and relationship among students, and it is true to say that without the influence and help of the Student Movement these two Anglo-Russian Conferences would not have taken place.

The first Conference was planned by British and Russian delegates at a meeting of the World's Student Christian Federation in Denmark, August, 1926, and was held at the Diocesan Retreat House, St. Albans, in January, 1927. That Conference was so successful that it was decided to continue the work then begun in the not too distant future. The date and place of the second Conference was decided later, and the second Conference was held from December 28th, 1927, to January 2nd, 1928, again at the St. Albans Retreat House.

There were about 70 present, mostly students, but including a few 'senior friends', and of course the leaders on both sides. No attempt will be made in this introduction to describe the course of events, since that has been done to a large extent by the writers of the Russian and British impressions. It is hoped that the programme of the Conference printed below, together with the impressions which follow, will give some idea of what the Conference was like, though no words could ever give an adequate picture of the reality.

PROGRAMME.

Wednesday, December 28th.

Afternoon	...	Arrival and Opening Service (Russian).
5.0— 7.0 p.m.		'The Anglican Church.' Canon Seaton.
		'The Orthodox Church.' Professor Arseniew.
8.0 p.m.	...	'Intercession.' English student address.
8.30 p.m.	...	Compline.

(The above was not followed strictly owing to late arrival of members.)

Thursday, December 29th.

7.30 a.m.	...	Sung Eucharist.
10.0—12.30 p.m.		'The Nature of the Kingdom of God.' Bishop Charles Gore and Father S. Boulgakoff.
5.0— 7.0 p.m.		Discussion groups.
8.0 p.m.	...	'Corporate Worship.' (In Church, place of various ceremonies.) Russian student address.
8.30 p.m.	...	Vespers. (Russian.)

Friday, December 30th.

7.30 a.m.	...	Orthodox Liturgy.
10.0—12.30 p.m.		General discussion on 'The Nature of the Kingdom of God.'
5.0— 7.0 p.m.		'Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.' Bishop Frere and Professor S. Besobrasoff.
8.0 p.m.	...	'Confession and Holy Communion.' English student address.
8.30 p.m.	...	Compline.

Saturday, December 31st.

7.30 a.m.	...	Sung Eucharist.
10-0—12.30 p.m.		General discussion on 'Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.'
5.0— 7.0 p.m.		Talks about the S.C.M.
8.0 p.m.	...	'Confession and Holy Communion.' Russian student address.
8.30 p.m.	...	Saturday Vigil Service. (Russian.)

Sunday, January 1st.

Morning	...	Orthodox Liturgy, followed by an address by Father S. Boulgakoff on 'The Mother of God'.
Afternoon	...	Devotional address by Father Nicolas Behr.
8.0 p.m.	...	Solemn Evensong.

Monday, January 2nd.

7.30 a.m.	...	Orthodox Liturgy.
10.0—12.30 p.m.		Closing meeting and summing up.
1.0 p.m.	...	Closing service (in Russian and English), conducted by Father Nicolas Behr.

It was hoped that Dr. Kullman, Secretary of the Co-ordination Committee for work amongst Russian students outside Russia, and amongst students in Orthodox Balkan Countries, who was present at the Conference, would be able to contribute the conclusion of this report, but he has been unable to get it written in time for printing. It will, however, appear in the 'Journal of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius'.

During this second Conference many people expressed the desire that we should bind ourselves together into some sort of formal Fellowship, with a view to carrying on the work already begun, and also to promote further intercourse between the Russian and the Anglican members of the two Conferences. At the final meeting, the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius was formed, two Presidents were elected and a Committee was appointed. The objects of the Fellowship include the following :

(1) Regular prayer for unity, (a Fellowship Prayer Card has already been issued) ;

(2) The publication of a Quarterly Journal ;

(3) The fostering of mutual service ;

(4) The promotion of study with a view to a better mutual understanding of the two Churches on doctrine and practice.

Further information with regard to the Fellowship or its 'Journal' may be had on application to the Fellowship Secretary :

Miss X. Braikevitch,
80, Woodstock Avenue,
Golders Green, London, N.W. 11 ;

or to,

The Student Christian Movement,
'Annandale,' North End Road,
Golders Green, London, N.W. 11.

The Message of the Metropolitan Eulogius

to the Second Anglo-Russian Student Conference,
held at St. Albans, from 28th Dec., 1927, to 2nd Jan., 1928.

FROM my whole heart I greet the Second Anglo-Russian Student Conference, and call for the blessing of God on its labours.

A year ago, at a Conference at St. Albans, the first encounter between the British and the Russian Student Christian Movements took place. The encounter passed in corporate worship and labour. The Lord blessed this encounter with the joy of mutual love. This was the first step. The Conference set up connections which called for a new encounter, it set up new questions, it covered with love differences which had been realised. But love is not afraid of outspokenness—it calls for truth. The aim of the Conference is to make us see each other clearer, understand each other better. Like the first Conference this one will not efface differences. Already in the ancient times differences between Eastern and Western Christianity existed. The varied paths of history have served to deepen them. But 'In my Father's house there are many mansions'. The oneness of the Church is realised in love. 'And I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them'. Love demands a struggle. The young generation comes to relieve those working now. But the service remains the same—the building of the House of God—a true union between the One Flock and the One Shepherd.

Let the Lord bless your new encounter with a joy of new love for the good and glory of His holy Church.

A GENERAL ACCOUNT

OF THE CONFERENCE.

BY ONE OF THE BRITISH DELEGATION.

FROM Wednesday, Dec. 28th, to Jan. 2nd, the second Conference of Russian Orthodox and Anglican students was held, under the auspices of the Student Christian Movement, at the Diocesan Retreat House, St. Albans. It needed the very real warmth of fellowship and understanding which we enjoyed together to counteract the unpropitious elements. We arrived to find the hotels crowded with stranded motorists unable to leave the snow-bound town, so that many of us had to scatter all over the place for our sleeping accommodation, while the Russian delegates from Paris were delayed by the Channel storms.

The Anglican representatives were mostly Anglo-Catholics, three from Cuddesdon, and several from Oxford and Cambridge, but this time we were glad to welcome three Evangelicals—the Principal and two students from Wycliffe Hall—who had seen the Orthodox Church at Jerusalem, and who entered most fully and freely into the spirit of the Conference.

The Principal of Cuddesdon opened the Conference with an address on the Church of England, speaking especially about English history and the national character, the only way, he said, in which our Church could be understood. Professor Arseniew then spoke of the Orthodox Church, defining its most characteristic feature as a wondering contemplation of God revealed in Christ.

Two main subjects had been put down for discussion, both in small groups and by the whole Conference. The first was 'The Nature of the Kingdom of God'. Dr. Gore opened this, laying great stress on the moral witness of the Church. Father Boulgakoff, head of the Paris Academy, read a long and interesting paper, leaning more to the view of it as a

present communion with God. It was characteristic of the two views that, whereas Dr. Gore translated the well-known text as 'The Kingdom of God is *among* you', the Russians all assumed that the proper rendering was *within*.

The second subject was 'The Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures', opened by the Bishop of Truro and Professor Besobrasoff. Here as before we found a very large measure of agreement. The discussion turned very largely on the Book of Genesis. Neither side stood out for the view that it was literal history, but while some Anglicans frankly proposed to treat it as allegory, the Russians preferred to regard it as metaphysically true in the realm of what they called 'meta-history'.

We had student addresses on 'Confession and Communion' in the two Churches; Novice Roseveare from Kelham spoke on 'Intercession', and from the Russian side Father Nicolas Behr, of St. Philip's church in London, gave us a very beautiful address on 'Prayer'.

The services were alternately Orthodox and Anglican. Dr. Frere celebrated High Mass on Saturday, and took Solemn Evensong on Sunday. We attended the Russian Vigil Service and the Divine Liturgy, a small choir from Paris rendering the music in a most moving and devotional manner. On the last day of the Conference we had a most impressive service, half Russian and half English, taken by Father Behr. After the Orthodox service of Thanksgiving we said the 'Te Deum', then the Russians joined us in singing 'Ye watchers and ye holy ones', and the Orthodox priest said the Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

Perhaps we learned most by informal talks; our Russian friends were as thirsty for information about the rejection of the Prayer Book as we were for details about the relation of their Church to the Soviet Government. It was decided to continue the friendships we had formed together in a society to be called 'The Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius'.

RUSSIAN IMPRESSIONS

Introduction.

IT has fallen to me to try and give a summary of the impressions of the Russian delegates. I find it a difficult thing to do, and I am sure this attempt is very imperfect. I have tried to mention every view expressed in the papers which have been sent in, and have quoted from the letters in many cases. I hope that this summary will give some idea as to what the impressions of the Russians were.

Comparison between First and Second Conference.

Most of us came to the second Conference with a mingled feeling of fear and misgiving—what will this second meeting be like? Will it resemble the first, or will it be different, or will it be a failure altogether? Last year we achieved unanimity—all seemed to pass under the sign of inspired enthusiasm of the first encounter. There seemed to be no differences in the first joy of our meeting. And now, the second Conference was bound to be difficult; the questions raised by it were outlined last year, and already then a divergence seemed inevitable. Besides, during this time we had come to know each other better, and differences which were not noticed, perhaps, at our first meeting became more and more apparent. But the period of our first acquaintance had passed. St. Paul said in his second epistle to the Corinthians, 'Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts'. This was the message which we wished both to give and to receive. And I believe it was so. Our unity is not a gust of short-lived enthusiasm, but the result of an endeavour to sacrifice to this common work of ours a part (though, perhaps a very small part) of our life—and God always rewards such an attempt. But all our misgivings melted, though the second Conference was quite different from the first. As one

of our delegates said, 'What struck me most at the last Conference was the fact that, though the new members on both sides out-numbered the old, it was not a repetition, but a very successful continuation of the first Conference. There was less polite reserve, a more open approach to difficulties, and an admirable suspicion of such old red-herrings as "East and West"'. And it is always so—in spiritual life difficulties come with growth.

The Nature of the Kingdom of God.

The work of the Conference centred chiefly round two fundamental questions, 'The Nature of the Kingdom of God,' and 'The Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures'. After the addresses the questions were discussed in groups, at general meetings, and also in personal talks. The first question raised was that of 'the Kingdom of God'. Is it possible here on earth by our own human efforts to bring about the Kingdom of God? In the actual understanding of the Kingdom of God we felt that there was no divergence, but the British, owing to their active striving to apply their religious views practically, seem to hasten on with their own forces; here on earth they seek to bring about the Kingdom of God, which comes not with observation, for the Kingdom of God is within us. It was a joy to realise a deep inner understanding which became quite evident after group discussions. It is often thought that Anglicanism as well as the whole of Western Christianity is practical and active, while Eastern Christianity is supposed to be cut off from life and especially marked by a contemplative spirit. Our discussions and talks seemed to show how unnaturally simplified and mistaken such a classification appeared to be. 'Most Anglican students seemed to understand very well all the importance of "inner doing" for a Christian, for his relationship to the Church and social life in general. They deeply realised the necessity of help by grace required for a struggle with sin, and in striving to better the social conditions of life in England; they saw that the path towards this lies first of all through the inner growth of the personality. We Russians succeeded in showing that our Church is not indifferent to the material well-being of our people. She was and is a source of true knowledge, while she often raises the moral as well as the economic level of the surrounding population.' The Anglicans learned with surprise

of the enormous highly-organised economies of some of our monasteries, and for the first time they heard of our monastic schools, where, as in the case of the Lesnenkov Monastery, thousands of orphans were educated. Of course there are differences in outlook due to national character, education, &c., and these often find expression in a difference of emphasis. Another question which arose was that of nationalism in religion. One of the delegates says, 'One of the principal props of the Orthodox Church is nationalism, and one of the chief bonds of spiritual union between it and the Anglican Church is the fact that the Anglican Church is the only national Church in Western Christendom. The history of Anglicanism is a glorious assertion of this national principle in the Church in a world of Church internationalism'.

Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

It was much more difficult to find common language with the English in this question of interpretation of the Scriptures. Modern Anglican theology is very interested in all kinds of new research, both in connection with the criticism of biblical text and developments in natural science. Anglicans often lean towards an acceptance of the mythical nature of the Old Testament narratives, and sometimes even appear uncertain in their acceptance of the truth of this or that Evangelical event. It seemed sometimes that our divergencies would be irreconcilable, but what actually took place exceeded even our most optimistic expectations. Our Orthodox attitude to Holy Tradition was quite a discovery for the Anglicans. After being convinced that we are free in our scientific investigations, that the Church does not require from us a forced recognition of the truth of this or that theological opinion, as it often happens in Roman Catholicism, they went to meet us and showed what a significance the Church tradition has for them likewise, though sometimes they appear not to have the courage of owning this. 'But when the very possibility of critical research in connection with the Scriptures was denied, when beforehand there was a prejudiced rejection of the last results of criticism, which was sometimes shown by some of the Orthodox members of the Conference, then the English seemed troubled, and often, on seeing such an attitude, became deaf to our arguments, and affirmed that we were simply scientifically behind them and therefore not competent in these questions.'

Their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and in general of critical research in connection with the text of the Bible, were of course much richer than ours. But, on the whole, these were separate divergencies. 'In the fundamental things we came to a perfect understanding, for the English, in the majority, agreed that Holy Tradition alone makes the understanding of the Holy Scriptures possible, while we on our part helped them in this, destroying their false idea of Holy Tradition as of some external authority which forces the mind and reason and even the feelings of the believer. For Holy Tradition is the action of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in the Church, which, as everything divine, abounds with the spirit of love, truth, and liberty. Such an interpretation of Holy Tradition appeared dear and understandable to the hearts of the English.'

The word 'meta-history' which was first used at the last Conference caused long and heated arguments. Perhaps this word does not adequately express what we want to say, but it is in connection with the idea itself that the difference between the Anglican and the Orthodox lies. 'Through the prism of reason towards faith, this is the way of the Western Christian. Through faith to knowledge and understanding, is the religious way of the Orthodox. The reflection of the supernatural, incomprehensible ways of God in earthly history of mankind, a contact between eternity and time in the narratives of the Bible, this is the stumbling-block on which our Western and Eastern mentalities seemed to diverge.' These differences seemed greater to some of us than to others, but what Professor Besobrasoff said in his address really explains very well the the difference in our attitude, 'It is difficult to explain in human language the conception of meta-history, to explain inwardly, in agreement with the spirit of Orthodoxy, divergencies in the Gospel narratives. But one analogy has constantly come to my mind—a comparison with an Orthodox icon. An icon is not a portrait. An icon is devoid of naturalism. Its conventionally angular forms are not met with in life. The unrealism of the icon seems to point to the mystery of another life. This analogy expresses the difference which exists between us. There exist higher requirements sought for from an icon which cannot be satisfied by a historically exact, true, and even inspiring picture of a religious subject. The difference between such a picture and an icon corresponds to a historical and a meta-historical interpretation of the Word of God'. That is where the difference lies, or rather, the emphasis.

Other Questions raised at the Conference.

Besides these principal questions raised by the Programme, there were others which seemed to arise out of the Conference itself. One of these is very important. Fr. Sergius spoke on Sunday, after the Liturgy, on the Mother of God, on her protecting veil spread over the world. He concluded : 'The world suffers. The heart of all creation weeps. The soul exhausted in its forsakenness by God, crucifies itself on the Cross. But the world is not left in its sorrow unto death ; man is not alone in his grief. The Mother's heart is wounded and torn to pieces ; together with us weeps the Mother of God. The tearful prayer of the all-pure One is a prayer with us and for us. Let us know then Whose heart we wound with our sins, with Whose tears our trespasses are always washed. And let every creature know that he is not forgotten by the Mother to Whom every human soul is close. What can be greater than this consolation? The Mother of God is the heart of the Church. This heart suffers and is wounded by the divisions in the Church ; eager it is to overcome them, and it is to Her now, also, that our prayers must be directed, that She may unite us under Her protecting veil in the one Church of Her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ!'

Some of the Anglicans were struck with the numerous allusions, prayers and songs to the Mother of God in our Saturday evening service, which deals chiefly with the events of the Old Testament and the preparation for the coming of the Saviour. Our attitude to the Mother of God seemed quite a new and vast unexplored field to the Anglicans. They seemed to be afraid sometimes that in our attitude there was something akin to idolatry. Sometimes on their part there was fear and surprise or restraint, where there might have been love and veneration without any fear of idolatry. The attitude of the Orthodox Church, so different from the Roman, seemed something quite new to them.

Worship.

This is as far as the Programme and the discussions go. But there was also another side of the Conference which alone made all this possible in the way it actually happened—the

side of worship. 'But difficult though the questions were, heated as were the discussions—the day always began and ended in the reverent calm of the small chapel. And the morning and evening services, alternatively Orthodox and Anglican, united us before one altar in one common prayer, gave us strength for the dawning day, or dispersed the difficulties which had arisen in the course of the day past. And such a lot of new things towards a better spiritual understanding were revealed to us in Divine Worship!' 'And there was the greatest thing of all—from our own personal experience of the Conference—we realised better what the Church was, we realised this again and again—that it was something intensely living, moved by the Holy Spirit. That, in spite of the differences, by God's grace we had it there. That in spite of all we were a part of Christ's Church united in love and understanding, and that is why all these differences could exist.' There was 'a feeling of spiritual friendship sanctified by the invisible presence of Christ:—Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them. This was a basis, a content and a maintenance of the Conference. I was very glad to hear different voices during the Conference; it is only when there are various voices (all kinds of voices) but not dissonant voices, that a choir sounds in a most beautiful manner. It seems to me that our future aim is to live with a feeling of the friendship in Christ, Who unites all singing in praise before Him'. And after Divine worship 'there often arose a feeling of great joy, which yet had a great sadness in it—a yearning that our unity which we had experienced in the spirit of worship might become fulfilled both spiritually and bodily, that we might be granted to partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord together from the same cup, when the times would be fulfilled. And that perhaps it was better that at present it remained so, for we were not yet worthy of so great a joy, though the desire was kindled in our hearts.'

Another delegate says, 'Thinking of it all now, I remember that there were two feelings struggling within me: the feeling of joy because of the extraordinary unity, and sorrow that this unity has not as yet come about in full, and that this feeling of corporate unity was only a foretaste of the general unity that was to come, amid a sea of deep disunion, lack of understanding and indifference. But it is not our work to fix times and dates. That which we are attempting is impossible for man but possible for God. Therefore, let us pray remembering that that which we are praying for is acceptable to God, who said: That they all may be one. We realised that it was part of the work of our life to carry this message far and wide.'

Personal Impressions.

Before saying a few words on the closing service, we must give some more personal impressions of some of the delegates: 'In recollecting all that was lived through and all the people encountered, one cannot fail to stop on the figures of Bishop Gore and the Bishop of Truro, which live in the memory. The tall, thin figure of Bishop Gore, the brilliant interpreter of Anglican theological thought, composed and sure of himself, yet filled with deep inner humility—which seems so distinct from the cold reserve which we often ascribe to the English character. I recollect also the kindly and sympathetic Bishop of Truro who knew so well how to get on with students, soon finding a place in their heart . . . I remember also a girl student. It is difficult to guess judging by her look that in her soul a decision has been made of devoting her whole life to the service of Christ completely, of taking the vow and leaving with a small mission for difficult work in the far off India.'

'I felt I was talking to a man or woman very near to me in his or her spiritual experience. I found out at the Conference that we could not only love but also understand each other. Through love we can come to mutual understanding, as it is expressed in our Liturgy: Let us love one another so as to be able to confess with one single mind the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.'

'Through the common prayer, addressed to the One Lord, we grow nearer one to another. That *is* the right way to come nearer. This atmosphere of spiritual proximity, of brotherhood, was felt in the discussions too, it pervaded the whole . . . We really lived and moved in a brotherly atmosphere for these six days. It was not an atmosphere of high strung notes, it was rather a spirit of balance and simplicity, a simple-hearted modest approach to the great subjects which stood before us. And at the same time we felt with a feeling of deep satisfaction a real joy—how small and inadequate are

all of us, and everything we can say, before the face of the great realities of God, our Saviour, and the Church His body. We have started together on a great task. May God help us therein.'

Results.

A question arises—what did we give and what did we receive? It is difficult to define this exactly. Different people learnt different things. 'The English learned from us of life in the Church. We realised ourselves how much is given to us within our Orthodox Church—our Liturgy, our attitude to sin, to confession, our veneration of the Mother of God and of the saints—all this was a great and fundamental help to the Anglicans in their spiritual life. But we Russians did not receive less. The English are an exceptionally religious people who know how to pray and who love prayer—for example all the English students knew the long prayer: Thee O Lord we glorify . . . *(Te Deum)*, by heart, while among us Russians, only individuals knew it.' We were deeply impressed to see how for a long period after the service was finished they remained in Church, passing time in meditation and prayer. It is also touching and inspiring to witness how closely the life of England is bound up with Christianity. Men and girls leave England for a new life in India, Africa and other places as Christian missionaries, while we Russians are often by no means on such a high level. 'It is also good for us Russians to come in contact with English scientific thought. In England there are many scientists of world-wide fame who remain ardent Christians. In the times of the development of anti-religious propaganda in Russia, when all the forces of the Communists are concentrated on proving that science and culture are incompatible with Christianity, a good and thorough knowledge of the Christian culture and science of England will, doubtless, be very valuable.'

Closing Meeting.

And now about the close of the Conference—the closing meeting and the thanksgiving service. 'Quietly, without the pathos of last year, the results of the days passed were summed up and wishes in relation to future work in common were expressed. And then a voice—it sounded from the depths of a man's soul—not of an Anglo-Catholic and not of an

Orthodox. And this voice in complete fulness revealed to us that which would have passed unnoticed, that which we ourselves did not notice until after. A man who had come from another tradition, who looked on our encounter with the eyes of a Protestant, saw in it a unity of the Church, and for the Church his soul thirsted. With humility he felt himself at the wedding feast of the bridegroom and spiritually felt the existence of the one flock collected by the One Shepherd.' And then the triumphantly ringing words of the last concluding services. That which could not have been achieved by talks and discussions was brought about by Divine Grace. It lit up the future, hidden from our eyes, with a prophetic light. For the first time in the same Divine Service the songs of our Orthodox Molieben mingled with the Anglican prayers and ended with a common glorification 'with one mouth and one heart' expressed in the words of St. Ambrose of Milan: Thee, O Lord, we praise . . . We came to the Conference wavering and uncertain of ourselves, and the more wonderful it was for us to leave it with a conviction that a new and great step on the way of our mutual rapprochement had been taken. It was not we or our weak forces that were the cause of this. And the members of the Conference will remember for the whole of their life this concluding service when suddenly we all of us felt the power of our corporate prayer which made us for a moment forget all our differences. 'And when one of the delegates after the service said that for the first time he felt that certain barriers between the English and the Orthodox had crashed the student to whom he was speaking said, "during this hour these barriers did not exist".'

BRITISH IMPRESSIONS

Introduction.

THERE are two direct and simple ways of describing a gathering. Either one person who has been present gives an account from his own point of view, or else various members combine to form a symposium, each contributing his own impression. Both these methods admit of freshness and interest, because they are first-hand.

There is a third method, the one now laid on me, that of collecting the 'impressions' sent by members of the Conference, trying to thread them into a continuous summary. I quite recognise that in this case it was the only method available, but it is only fair to warn my readers that it is the dullest and flattest way of doing things.

Instead of the steady point of view of the single narrator, we get the style of a police-constable making a report, or the neatness of a precis, which reduces the animated discussion to such a formula as 'while on the one hand it was maintained . . . it was retorted on the other'. Many photos of the same scene from different angles may all be charming, but they lose their attractiveness when melted into a 'composite' picture; I shall neither be telling the story of the St. Albans Conference myself nor letting other people tell it, but, like the uninspiring chairman of a meeting, confine my remarks to reading apologetic letters from absent friends.

Still, however the story is told, the St. Albans Conference was a great meeting, and the warmth and vitality that was strong enough to overcome the fogs and snows of Hertfordshire ought to be able to glow through the most imperfect representation. In order to avoid as much as possible the terminology of a report, I have generally used the first person singular. It sounds arrogant, but I hope it helps to give a certain unity to it; in reality, of course, what 'I' say is coloured by the letters I have read; when I actually quote the words of others, I have used inverted commas, though I have not mentioned the names of the writers. This omission is due to a desire

not to interrupt the narration, and not to any want of gratitude to the admirable letter-writers who have made it such a pleasure to work on the material supplied by them.

General.

As we stepped gingerly over slippery pavements or waited in a huddled crowd at the doors of 'Golden Hens' and other St. Albans hostelries, we talked together about the coming Conference. Those who had been last year, while they conveyed to us the impression of something very important and interesting, took a malicious pleasure in frightening us by misleading statements. The Russian services, they said, were so long and the Russians themselves so holy, that there was no time for anything but spiritual converse, and to mention the coal strike or to make a joke about the tower of Babel would be like intruding on the prayers of a saint.

Of course it was a joke; any lingering misgivings were dispersed by Professor Arseniew's delightful smile and the delicious folk-singing of the choir. All the same there was much that might have separated us, and many who had been there before were wondering whether we had meanwhile moved nearer together or further apart. To such people this year's atmosphere came as a great occasion for thanksgiving. 'It was all the difference between rather anxious hope and cheerful confidence.'

I know how tired we are of the phrase 'the sense of fellowship'; no two persons ever meet for half-an-hour now-a-days without feeling it; I shall not use anything so banal to describe an experience so fresh as ours. The phrases used of it have the ring of sincerity. 'The most remarkable thing was the speed with which we became a family.' 'One might have thought that we had known each other many years.' Other personal testimonies point the same way: 'It soothed many troubles I had, and opened up a wide world of hope in front of me. If ever I forget any of my experiences in this life, I shan't forget my feeling of intense sadness when I realised for the first time the broken unity of the Church of the Saviour. Its wound was a wound in my body, and its pain I felt in my heart; I wondered if it was at all possible to get over it. At St. Albans I found consolation, youth feeling the Church's pain and trying to comfort her for it.' Another member, describing an international school in July, 1914, says, 'Suddenly out of the blue came rumours of war. Then it was terrible

to witness how racial prejudice immediately sprang up among this so lately harmonious company. . . . The St. Albans Conference has helped to lift that cloud of horror which had remained with me so long. The spirit of unity and love I found there seems to me to be upon a sounder basis than before.' Another writes, 'I have met orthodox people before belonging to several different countries but never before in quite such interesting or hopeful conditions'.

I suppose we Anglicans cannot help feeling that other people need a lot of training before they understand us. 'We are what our history has made us; the Russians have never had a Reformation; how can they grasp the positive illogical Anglo-Saxon temperament?' Such generalisations met an early death. The Russians were not in the least either shocked or surprised at our Western downrightness. It was indeed madness on our part if we expected to alarm by our audacities and our practical problems men and women who had been through a revolution such as we have never dreamed of, and many of whom had passed through crises of darkness and disbelief compared to which the 'hardiness of our critics' does not look very impressive.

Services.

The Russian services made as deep an impression as the year before, and the Chairman struck the right note when he said that the devotional singing of the choir was a revelation to us and a great contrast to our hearty hymns. No doubt we found some of it strange; the Vigil service on Saturday evening was hard for us, perhaps because we were tired; the hymn of St. John of Damascus seemed to us rather too fancifully allegorical, e.g. 'On a hard corner stone did the Creator smash the serpent, as if he were an infant'. But whatever we may have felt about details, the general effect of the ensemble on all of us was unmistakable. 'To begin with, the services were strange, both by their length and their unfamiliar music, but as the days passed I realised how the singing expressed the spirit of yearning devotion and hunger after God. It fascinated me, and I understood how the services do not seem long even to the peasants, and why they should protest against any abbreviation of them. I understood too what a source of wealth and strength these long services of corporate worship are to the Church and to the individual, how they have a merit quite distinct from any amount of private devotion and

prayer. I wondered whether we Anglicans are right to yield to the popular clamour for shorter services, and whether future generations will not blame us for this. I found in them the freedom, the informality, the simple joy, which seemed to me so characteristic of the Russians; and lastly, I thought I perceived in the Russian Liturgy the preservation of the *agape* aspect of the Supper which we celebrate, and this without any loss of the sacrificial nature of this great act of worship. I think in our Western Mass we have not retained these various aspects so evenly, and indeed in some parts there is an attempt to revive the *agape* by a separate service.'

Many of us felt that it might be useful next year to discuss together the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. The 'Language of the Liturgy,' and the devotional address on Sunday on 'The Mother of God', left some Anglicans with a desire for 'fuller explanation from the Russian side'.

As regards our Anglican services it is not for us to speak; I hope they gave a good impression of our worship, but I think there is something in the suggestion that 'the attendance of the Russians at an ordinary sung Eucharist in a parish church or the Abbey (as in 1927) might present a light on the English Church that Conferences can't quite give'.

A word should be added on the deeply impressive closing service. I shall not soon forget the moment when, while the sound of the old Slavonic was still in our ears full of suggestion of far-off days when England and Russia had not heard of one another, the priest began the Lord's Prayer in English, 'a sincere gesture of love to us as deep and genuine as our response to it'; and then as we sang 'Ye watchers and ye holy ones' together, echoing phrases from the hymn of the Cherubim, it seemed to make the bridge between us a real and solid thing. 'One felt tempted to call out in triumphant joy "It fits, it fits".'

DISCUSSIONS AND PAPERS.

Discussion was of three sorts—general, by groups, and informal. Many felt that more time might profitably have been given to the more private meetings. The informal talks both at and between meals were very interesting. We were all so overflowing with things to say and to ask, that there was never any need to make conversation. The Russians were keen to hear all about the rejection of the Deposited Book,

and we catechised them mercilessly (for example, on the excommunication of Tolstoi). The following is vivid and typical: 'Various differences occurred between Anglicans and Russians, and among Anglicans, in unofficial groups; I took part in one respecting belief in angels and in a personal devil; the subject changed, and we found ourselves discussing the Holy Eucharist with a complete rearrangement of sides. If the Russians can appreciate this sort of thing they are a long way towards understanding the temper of that Divine Mystery—the Church of England.'

(1) The Kingdom of God.

Someone said with justice that we started with the formula 'Orthodoxy equals Mysticism; Anglicanism equals Social Reform', and seemed unable to move away from it. Concessions were made, no doubt. 'I received the impression that the Russians had moved on since last year; it was probably conveyed by the full and frank confession that before the Revolution the Church in Russia had gravely failed to insist on social righteousness'; on the other side, speakers from Kelham and Mirfield insisted that the Church of England had devotional as well as social ideals.

I am inclined to agree with a member who says that all these points in the general discussion were 'somewhat off the main issue', namely, the nature of the Kingdom's coming. 'I never felt that we faced the problem whether we agreed in regarding the coming of the Kingdom as possible on the earth, or whether the coming of the Kingdom was more of an apocalyptic nature, and not to be accomplished by social reform and religious teaching.' My own impression was that of the three possible meanings of the Kingdom of God—the transfiguration of the individual soul, the Church fighting for justice, and the Parousia of Christ at the Last Day,—the Russians thought more naturally of the first and the last (the mystical and eschatological), and we tended to think of the second (the ethical and institutional). This is illustrated by some of the difficulties felt by the Russians about Dr. Gore's address.

Bishop Gore's interpretation of ἐντὸς ὑμῶν as '*among* you' seemed to the Russians inadequate; critical considerations, such as the fact that the words were addressed to the Pharisees, did not prevent them from preferring the more mystical rendering '*within* you'; again, a phrase used by the Bishop 'Christianity is a life to be lived before it is a doctrine to be believed'

puzzled at least one group. 'It was generally agreed that it in no way implied priority of importance, since Christ is at once The Truth, the Way, and the Life; so it was asked if it could mean *before* in the temporal sense. On the one hand we were reminded that if any man will do His Will he shall know of the doctrine; on the other, that belief influences and in most cases precedes action.' I fancy the Bishop was really thinking of the early Church and the impression it made on the heathen world, first as a way of life and not as a mystery religion with a hidden secret in its midst.

Even where the influence of the Church in history was touched upon 'the Western ethical emphasis' seemed to some to clash a little with the 'Eastern eschatological expectation'. An Anglican, who may be described as 'plus Orthodoxe que les Orthodoxes', says: 'In Father Boulgakoff's paper the conversion of Constantine is seen not as a thing to be judged by moral gain or loss, but as a positive eschatological vision of God's unchanging purpose. The second half of the paper in which this truth was stressed in a constructive interpretation of the course of history, such as few Westerners really have troubled to make, must surely have opened the eyes of Englishmen who had the idea that the things of this world meant nothing to the Eastern Church'.

I hope that at the next Conference we may draw out this element in Russian religion, and hear their views about the Devil, Anti-Christ, and the Book of Revelation, instead of discussing our attitude to 'Social Reform', a phrase that has quite different connotations to Christian members of our Labour party and men who have been up against Bolshevism.

(2) *The Interpretation of Scripture.*

Everyone, I think, would admit that our differences were more serious and more important over this subject. While there was enough agreement to make further discussion hopeful, there are still many points on which we need further explanation on both sides; it is encouraging that the line of difference does not seem to be geographical; many Westerners seemed to understand and appreciate the Orthodox point of view, while the Russians gave us the impression of not all being equally stern in their criticism of our critical methods.

Here again I am inclined to think that we probably did not

approach the subject from the right end; we were too much excited by a phrase, and 'chased the elusive spirit of Meta-history too far'. The word is not very congenial to our scientific enquirers, who regard it as a way of avoiding the plain question 'Did this happen or not?' Here is an abstract from a group discussion on Genesis: 'The scientific historian and the scientist essaying to write the history of anything in the universe use the data given and try to picture what they had no means of observing directly, but with regard to the Creation this is manifestly impossible, in that man could not dare with his unaided vision to picture what God had done "in the beginning". Thus it was to the saints that one went for an account of the Creation based on spiritual "perceptions"'. In my own Group we asked 'Very well, then, will you call it an allegory?' but the meta-historians would not concede this, preferring to say that in a sense it had happened, though in a dimension with which science and history could not deal. Our Group was severely referred to as the only one where real disagreement had occurred; I wonder whether that was because we really did bump up against something important.

All the same, I think most of us would be doubtful whether much progress lies along that road; might it not be wise to forget for a moment Genesis and Meta-history and turn our attention to the New Testament and Tradition? Here no one denies that we are in touch with real facts which are of eternal significance, and we can accept up to a point what has been called the Chalcedonian view of history, i.e. that the New Testament is divine truth expressed under the guise of human happenings. 'English scholars,' says our Anglican interpreter of Russian thought, 'had paid too exclusive attention to the human nature at the expense of the divine; scripture must be interpreted both ways.' In one of the groups this explicit question came up for a short time, namely the relation of the human and divine elements in our Lord with especial reference to His ascription of the Pentateuch to Moses. The passage in the group report is worth quoting as I think it bears on questions far more vital than any raised in Genesis.

'On the Anglican side it was held that Christ's consciousness was limited by the outlook of His time, and that He was not intending to correct scientific error; on the Orthodox, that every word pronounced by Christ was eternal, unlimited by His age; that He was perfect God, and therefore could not have been ignorant of the true author of Genesis. The

Anglicans replied that humanity is liable to ignorance, and that it constitutes no sin and therefore no detraction of Christ's perfect humanity; the Orthodox replied that ignorance is due to sin; Christ had no sin, and that therefore He could not be ignorant; that man was made for omniscience, and that the saints, by virtue of their holiness, could understand something of the nature of the Trinity.'

This is only part of a talk in one group, but it seems to put very clearly the issues raised by the Chalcedonian view of history. It means that all events have their double side—how they look to men and how they look to God; of the former the historian is the interpreter, but for the latter the saints are the experts, and the result of their experience is the Divine Tradition.

Both these sides are necessary, the fact and its mystical meaning, as body is to soul, or as the Human and Divine Natures of Christ. While the Anglican's first question then is, 'Did it happen?' the Orthodox is at least as interested in the question 'What has been the meaning of this passage for holy men and women throughout the history of the Church?'

It is difficult for us to grasp the Divine Tradition, because it is hard for us to understand the Orthodox view of the Church. An Anglo-Catholic says, 'My ideas of the Church have been entirely Western; I inclined to think so much of the Church as the great world-force, the *Civitas Dei* ruling the nations and conquering the earth, and the spiritual and heavenly nature of the Church was rather left outside; from the Russians I learned the older, truer, more scriptural, more truly catholic nature of the Church as the great spiritual body that is risen with Christ'.

The authority of the Church is not therefore to them an external legal authority pressing on the conscience, but rather the Holy Spirit working in one's brothers and sisters in the Christian home. 'Our Western heresy is a cultivated blindness which refuses to recognise any truth which does not appear to fit in logically with the postulate of its rational system—a refusal to submit to anything which appears to run counter to individual freedom, asserting its right against Church, against God, whereas the Holy Spirit in a man, who cannot be inconsistent with His Divinity, alone give him any rights at all. Any assertion of the Anglican position in reality runs us into this heresy. The Westerner is afraid of venturing into this sea of Tradition, and yet if he knew it a little more, he would find that it was really very familiar, and would bring

him back into a world of simpler Christianity which in his childhood he had known very well'.

This close connection between Tradition and devotional atmosphere is illustrated by the constant appeal of the Russians to their Liturgies for the interpretation of Scripture. Thus it was stated in a group 'The Johannine authorship is accepted by the Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the words, Gospel of St. John, occur in the Holy Liturgy'.

On the Anglican side, two things are felt. Firstly, we wished to know more definitely what this Tradition said and where it was to be found. How was it that Theologians were not agreed as to its implications? Was it true that the Greek theologians were more liberal in their treatment of the Scriptures? And secondly, How does Bible history stand related to secular history? 'I heard one Russian say that the Bible stands on a different plane from anything else either historical or scientific, and therefore cannot be criticised and examined as we examine and criticise other books; I think that this is to us fundamentally wrong'.

Another Anglican says, 'I think we stopped discussing just as we were coming to the point. It seems to me quite certain that they will never understand how it is we presume to deal with the Bible as we do, until our attitude is made clear to them. Roughly the key to it is given by some words of Professor Besobrasoff's in the last discussion; he said, 'We cannot accept the theory of the composite origin of the Pentateuch from J, E, D, and P, because it would alter our whole idea of the manner of God's revelation in the Old Testament'. Our whole idea of the manner of God's revelation *has* been altered under the influence of evolutionary ideas, and that is why we are prepared to adopt critical principles in regard to the Bible.

Clearly we have much real discussion in front of us, but it could not be undertaken in more cheering conditions of mutual confidence and affection.

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